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President: Ms. Chatardová (Vice-President) ..... (Czechia)

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Ms. Chatardová (Czechia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(c) Statistics (E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35)

1. **Ms. Barata Bivar** (Brazil), Chair of the Statistical Commission, speaking via audio link from Brazil, introduced the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-eighth session (E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35). The presence of over 700 delegates at the opening session of the Commission's seventieth anniversary celebration in March was a reflection of how far the Commission had come.

2. Given the broad scope of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an unprecedented amount of data and statistics were needed to measure progress towards the 17 Goals and 169 targets. Two years earlier, the General Assembly had entrusted the Statistical Commission with the task of developing a global indicator framework to measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The bulk of the work had been done by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which had been established by the Commission and included 28 national indicator specialists representing all subregions of the world.

3. The global indicator framework had been adopted at the Commission's March session, with broad support from all regions. The framework's primary purpose was to provide a structure for addressing all aspects of the Goals and targets in the Secretary-General's annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. She drew the attention of the Council to the draft resolution contained in the report, entitled "Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and its annex containing the proposed global indicator framework. The draft resolution outlined specific areas of work for the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and criteria for further refinement of the indicators. Under the leadership of the Commission, the Group would continue to work on improving the framework through minor annual refinements and through two comprehensive reviews to be conducted in 2020 and 2025.

5. The draft resolution also focused on statistical capacity-building as a means of enabling national statistical systems to fully implement the 2030 Agenda. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data had been launched at the first United Nations World Data Forum in January and endorsed by the Commission in March. One of the strategic objectives of the Action Plan was to strengthen and expand data on all population groups with a view to leaving no one behind.

6. Lastly, the report contained decisions on the Commission's ongoing work, in such areas as quality assurance, big data, environmental-economic accounting and the international comparison programme, for the purpose of furthering the Commission's work on standardization and methodologies in order to meet the increased demand for data.

7. **Ms. Regueira** (Observer for Cuba) said that, while the global indicator framework was a significant starting point, it would require further refinement. Moving forward, it must continue to take into account different national realities, policies and levels of development and focus on the central role of national statistical offices in providing official data for drafting national follow-up reports on the Sustainable Development Goals and targets; the use of transparent methodologies and high-quality, timely, verifiable and reliable data; and the building of statistical capacity, particularly in developing countries.

8. In some cases, however, the indicators still did not address all aspects of the targets. Indicator 3.5.2 in particular required further adjustments, since its current wording reduced the scope of application of target 3.5 and was in fact a biased version of what had been agreed by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding the harmful use of alcohol. In that regard, WHO had recognized that the focus should not be on consumption per se, but rather on harmful consumption. Using per capita consumption as the only indicator was inadequate, as it did not differentiate between moderate and harmful consumption, or indicate and therefore address consumption outside the legal age limits. The indicator currently failed to recognize that WHO and its governing bodies bore primary responsibility for establishing international health regulations, standards and goals. It also restricted the freedom of Member States to adopt more suitable and comprehensive policies to address the harmful consumption of alcohol. It should therefore be one of the indicators that would be subject to further refinement and closer analysis by the Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020.

9. While the global indicator framework was the linchpin for all that Member States hoped to achieve in the coming years, its limitations could harm the proper

implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Every effort must be made to ensure that it reflected the vision of the 2030 Agenda in the quest for a fairer and more equitable international order.

10. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Observer for Mexico) said that the framework would be a catalyst for periodic measurement of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and also represented a starting point for countries to develop national indicators. In order to boost statistical capacity through capacity-building and technical assistance, particularly in developing countries in Africa, least developed countries, landlocked countries, conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, and middle-income countries, the global indicators must be as ambitious as the 2030 Agenda. Mexico would continue to share its experiences in the collection and production of verifiable and reliable statistics, in particular in relation to the most vulnerable countries in its region.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-eighth session (E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35)

11. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report.

Section A

Draft resolution: Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

12. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

13. **Mr. Lawrence** (United States of America) said that his delegation was pleased that the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators had agreed to a process whereby technical amendments and refinements could be proposed to continuously improve the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. However, many indicators, including some that were designated "tier I", contained serious weaknesses that would hinder their widespread acceptance and reporting. His country would continue its efforts to strengthen the framework through the established process Although it had previously raised concerns in the Group about individual indicators, some of those concerns remained unresolved. His delegation was ready to discuss them in detail with interested delegations at any time. All relevant stakeholders should engage in good faith in the revision and refinement process established by the Group to ensure that the framework was fit for purpose to accurately measure Member State-led efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Since many of the policies of the United States were still under review or development, his delegation reserved the right to provide further comments on the framework and other processes related to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Section B

Draft decision: Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-eighth session and the provisional agenda and dates for the forty-ninth session of the Commission

14. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (E/2017/54 and E/2017/L.21)

15. **Mr. Obermeyer** (Deputy Executive Director, New York Office of the World Health Organization (WHO)), introducing the report of the Director General of the World Health Organization on the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (E/2017/54), said that although the Task Force dealt with non-communicable diseases, it retained a special focus on the issue of tobacco. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development recognized the value of tobacco pricing and taxation as a revenue stream, and though $270 billion was collected each year, very little of it was received by the health sector. The work of the Task Force, in addition to its mandated objectives, had expanded over the previous several years and now included country visits at the request of Member States and joint programmes for implementation by the United Nations system. However, support for such work had been hindered by a lack of resources.

16. The Inter-Agency Task Force had held a number of high-level and follow-up and review meetings. A ministerial meeting would take place in Montevideo in October. It was very important not to abandon the fight against non-communicable diseases. Such diseases caused 70 per cent of deaths worldwide and billions of dollars in economic losses, but were largely preventable. Bearing in mind target 3.4 on non-communicable diseases, the interlinkages of non-communicable diseases across the Sustainable Development Goals, and the multisectoral response that was required, the Task Force had established several thematic working groups and joint initiatives to

address the harmful use of alcohol and various cancers, promote increased physical activity and deploy mobile technology to fight non-communicable diseases. The report contained information on those actions and a set of recommendations.

17. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that in response to the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, his country was accelerating its implementation of the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020 in order to reduce the impact of such diseases. China adhered to a comprehensive prevention-centred approach involving governmental direction, departmental cooperation and societal participation. His Government had incorporated the issue into major national programmes relating to the economy, social development and health, and had set out specific objectives and measures. It had already established 265 comprehensive pilot regions, effectively improving nationwide prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

18. China had also engaged in international cooperation on the issue. It was earnestly implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; working with WHO, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and companies on programmes for smoke-free workplaces; participating in initiatives by the association of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three Cooperation, and others; and deploying overseas medical teams to developing countries to provide assistance wherever possible. His delegation believed that WHO should play a leading role in the global prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, and encouraged developed countries to increase their financial and technical support to developing countries, so as to continuously improve prevention capacities worldwide.

19. **Ms. Raadik** (Estonia) said that her delegation attached great importance to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. The four main risk factors — tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet including excessive consumption of sugary drinks, and physical inactivity — constituted a major challenge for development in the twenty-first century and hampered the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals. It was especially important for the health of children and adolescents to minimize tobacco and alcohol consumption; for that, a special focus on school curricula and primary health care was needed. Her country planned to lead discussions on such topics during its forthcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Draft resolution E/2017/L.21: United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

20. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution E/2017/L.21, said that, with the support of the Task Force, many countries were developing national strategies to control non-communicable diseases. The Task Force was making every effort to raise States' awareness of ways to prevent such diseases and of their impact on other Sustainable Development Goals, and to form a broad international coalition to support countries that required assistance. A number of States were already providing regular support to the Task Force and thus contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

21. The Russian Federation continued to give priority to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, both nationally and internationally. Its efforts included a likely contribution of $1 million to the WHO-UNDP Global Joint Programme on Non-communicable Diseases.

22. It would be very timely to organize a conference in July 2017 ahead of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on non-communicable diseases to be held in 2018. Everyone was invited to participate in the thematic side event, to be held during the high-level political forum on sustainable development, on challenges and the implementation of national plans. A global conference on financing for combating non-communicable diseases could be organized in the run-up to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

23. The purpose of the draft resolution was to support the Task Force, in light of its positive results and the growing demand for its services. The operative part therefore focused on raising resources and establishing the necessary capacity in developing countries. It encouraged the thematic working groups to place greater emphasis on addressing additional factors contributing to the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases, and the members of the Task Force to develop strategies to prevent the tobacco industry from interfering in its activities.

24. Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Czechia, Japan, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) had joined the sponsors. Belarus, Finland, Greece,

Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Uruguay had joined as sponsors under rule 72 of the rules of procedure.

25. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

26. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) announced that Estonia, France and Ireland had become sponsors of the draft resolution. Mexico had become a sponsor under rule 72 of the rules of procedure [*]

27. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

28. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased to join the consensus on the draft resolution and strongly supported efforts to prevent and control non-communicable diseases. In the eighth preambular paragraph and paragraph 10, "model policy" should not be interpreted as being applicable to industries other than the tobacco industry, or to umbrella groups of business and industry representatives that might have representatives of tobacco firms among their members. The model policy had been developed to take into account the unique context of the tobacco industry and tobacco control. Her delegation did not view it as a precedent for establishing similar policies relating to other industries. All members of the Task Force were urged to maintain transparency, inclusiveness and dialogue with the private sector in addressing non-communicable diseases.

The meeting rose at 11.00 a.m.

[*] The delegation of Germany subsequently informed the secretariat that it had intended to become a sponsor of draft resolution E/2017/L.21.